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**Influence of Stakeholder Inclusive Initiation on Performance of Infrastructure Public  
Projects in Tharaka South Sub County**

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**Abstract**

**Purpose:** The aim of the study was to explore the influence of stakeholder inclusive initiation on performance of infrastructure public projects in Tharaka south sub county

**Methodology:** The study adopted descriptive research design. The unit of observation included 50 project committee, 75,250 project beneficiaries, 20 government officials, 20 implementing agencies and 65 community leaders. The study used purposive sampling method to obtain 143 respondents from the target population. Questionnaires were used to obtain firsthand information by use of open and closed ended questions for project beneficiaries. The study used both primary and secondary data. The quantitative data was analyzed by the use of inferential analysis and descriptive analysis in reference to statistical package of social sciences. The descriptive analysis helped to generate the percentage, means and frequencies. Tables were applied in data presentation.

**Findings:** Based on the finding stakeholder inclusive initiation play an essential role in performance of infrastructure public project ( $\beta=0.569, \rho=0.00$ ) From the feedback of most of the participants with a mean of 2.90, were moderate that they get in problem analysis. They also disagreed that they were allowed to give their views covering the feasibility study of the project by a mean of 2.965. The participants moderate that they were engaged in charter development by a mean of 2.923. However, they strongly disagreed that they were engaged in project documentation with a mean of 2.671. Lastly, they disagreed that they were allowed to fully participate at every activity at this stage with a mean of 2.748.

**Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy:** Stakeholders' theory may be used to anchor future studies on Public Projects. The study recommended that stakeholders get equally involved to every stage and should be a continuous process which create environment of tracking every activity to ensure performance of infrastructure public projects.

**Keywords:** *Inclusive Initiation, Performance, Infrastructure Public Projects*

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## INTRODUCTION

The performance of public projects is very crucial in assuring the needs of the people are fulfilled. performance of public projects is essential in promoting the development of a nation (Xue, 2018). The major public projects entail infrastructure such as health facilities, education facilities, road and conservancy projects which contribute to community development thus improving the standard of living of the that society and attracting more investment in the area. The success performance of public projects is determined through scope, quality and schedule utilized to bring the project to conclusion and the fulfilment of the stakeholders (Furmankiewicz, 2016). The minor decisions and emergency circumstances may seem not ideal for stakeholders' participation but is potent to get stakeholders on board in every stage (Keshkamat, 2019). According to (Mwanauumo, 2018), through stakeholder participation there is project performance.

Project performance specify the end result of the project at a defined time or over a steady timespan (Njogu, 2016). Performance ensure that an organization utilize its resources well and reduce the risks factors and other uncertainties in ensuring project objective are attained (Kululanga, 2010). Project performance is a kind of elaborated report that help to gauge the project in terms of its success criteria. Project performance findings offer data explaining execution along with the advancement of tasks in achieving the objectives project in every level of the cycle for every given project. Performance data should be verifiable, that is reflecting the activities progress towards realizing the project goal and objectives. Therefore, the performance should be in capacity to help in highlighting project supervision, major assumptions and risks, key problems that come across and the mitigation taken against them, and the status of the project in term of standards progress and possibility of meeting the intended objectives (Ayatah, 2012). Thus, project performance should act as a comparison indicator for the project lifecycle.

Stakeholders play a vital role in every project performance right from initiation to the end of the project. Regardless the nature of the project, effective stakeholder engagement is not only a good practice but also a requirement by the international standards of project management (PMI, 2017). By not engaging stakeholders, the project is likely to experience turbulence that leading to poor achievement of main reason for the project at the end. Worldwide, stakeholder inclusion in numerous projects is taking shape, a good example is in USA, where project managers are adapting a systematic approach that get stakeholders engaged in all project phases (Stoker, 2020). Another example is Asia where stakeholder interest is being addressed by collaborative engagements so as to create necessary successful performance at every project cycle, (Varral, 2020) (Panneer, 2021).

In Kiambu County, (Wangeci, 2013) assessed elements that affect the performance of Agricultural projects with exceptional reference to the NALEP projects in Ruiru Sub County. The study found that the ignorance of stakeholders at initiation stage of the project affected the enactment of the NALEP project followed by the process of planning, execution, and monitoring and evaluation. Poor project identification, selection, and preparation may kill the project at early stage. The ineffectiveness of poor project initiation could be as a result of non-involvement of stakeholders. This finding is also emphasized by (Borrmann, 2016) who identified that the initiation stage is very significant in promoting effective operation ensuring projects are coordinated and operate in accordance with the intended policy and goals. Hence there is a great benefit for stakeholders to get engaged right at the conception stage of the project. This increase the influence of the project performance making it a reality as the project

objectives and outcomes are well taken care off. By understanding the expectation of each and every stakeholder and them having all what it entails, the project makes the project more appealing and acceptable. This is because there is a coordinative in between the stakeholders that making them to be more than willing to provide resources for the project. The stake is in form of interest and ownership to the project. By facilitating discussion there is more collaboration and willingness for the project (Danielsen, 2005).

According to (Nijkamp, 2002) this stage should be well formulated has is the foundation of the project and if not well taken care of, the project is likely not to meet the intended purposes right from the start. A feasibility study should be carried out to test the suitability of the project environment and get lid of the project requirement. Any issue that arises should be noted and proper steps recommended to sought it out (Albert H. , 2004). The conception phase is the vision development stage pertaining all the activities relating to the project which include; financial analysis, stakeholders' analysis, scope analysis and the goals and objectives. At this phase all the controversial issues should be sought out before they become major threat and that causing permanent harm to the project that acting as a barrier to the project performance of the project development (Connor, 2007). Stakeholders' involvement in managing complex issues facilitate the legitimacy of the project process according to the study carried out by (Buysse, 2003). At the conception level, communication is key as it help to ensure well defined goals, clear roles in place and values for ensuring the commitment of the project team. According to (Malunga, 2004) project fail due to poor management of stakeholders.

According to (Fraser, 2006) no project that is successful by being controlled by a single stakeholder. The support of multi stakeholders is important and their role are different has they contain different ideology pertaining way of doing things. It is important to go through all project ideas and screen them (Ruwa, 2016). That the feasibility study enhances the option of going on with the project or not (Nyandika, 2014). At conception different methods are used to obtain the best project choice to be undertaken. Social analysis is a technique commonly used to enable examine the sustainability of project by examining the socio-cultural, historical and political issues regarding the project idea. The other technique is use of beneficiary assessment. This is the process of consultation between the administrators of the project and the one to own the project after completion in order to get more information and be accepted by community members. This technique is important when selecting the inputs of the project, potential limitation that are likely to occur and the necessary solutions during implementation of the project (Davis, 2010). The beneficially analysis focuses more on key beneficiaries of the project as it reveals more about the socio-cultural conditions of the people. According to (Mahmound-Jouini, 2016) the beneficiary analysis is essential for outlining the impediments that are more likely to be experienced in the implementation stage of the project. It helps to capture more details concerning the design to be used and problem likely to be experienced thereafter.

According to (PMI, 2017), the project performance indicators involve the constraint of time, scope, cost and quality. The parameters depend on each other such that if scope, time or cost is influenced in whichever way then at least one of the other indicators will fall victim of the same. Project performance has been described by a number of researchers (Karanja, 2012) by application of iron triangle which involves time, cost, scope and quality of project management. Therefore, Performance helps an organization to be in agreement with its needs thus fulfilling stakeholders current and future needs and ambitions (Hallstedt, 2017). That through performance, a project is able to achieve currents needs and still allow the future needs to be

achieved too. This is because both current and future needs compromise each other and are considered equal (WSSD, 2002). Performance thus occurs when likeminded stakeholders come together to aggregate resources and build new capacities (Lumpkin, 2019).

Hence, the above highlighted studies have demonstrated that for the project to become successful there is a need of stakeholders' inclusion in areas of joint decision making, labor provision, formulation of new ideas and environments of working together to address out various challenges. Numerous researchers that have participated in this area of stakeholder participation and project performance have not addressed the important of measuring underlying on stakeholder participation through consultative planning, collective implementation and joint monitoring as the foundation to support project performance. A good example is the research done by (Clarkson, 2015) and (Gonzalez, 2018) whereby it mainly focused on costs performances rather than the overall project performances that creating a gap on performance of project as a whole. Hence the focus of this research. Furthermore, various findings to some extents have given little efforts concerning the relation between stakeholders' participation and the performance of project. However, the researchers who try to set up the link involving stakeholders' participation field never measured inclusively the variables of planning, implementation and joint project monitoring; action plans that respond to institution issues, job creation; and Budgetary performance which form the specificity of this study. Hence the need to conduct this study that analyses the link that exists and connect stakeholder engagement and project performance.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The World Bank report (World Bank, 2018) outlined that good infrastructure aid to improved productivity thus increasing GDP. From the projects carried out in the developing nations their area of concern that has led to failure in project majorly is inadequate engagement of stakeholders brought about by incompetence, ineffectiveness plus illiteracy of stakeholders (Tiffow, 2013) From a study conducted by KPMG, around 70% of institution agreed that one or more project failed within a span of one year (Lim, 2020). PwC research that contained 10,640 different projects, revealed 2.5% of project are done 100% successful (Chohen, 2019), rest 97.5% of project fail to meet either, the objectives, scope, time and budget especially on public project.

According to (Odhiambo, 2020) linked poor performance of Kenya mega projects to insufficient policy aligned to implementation of the projects due to inadequate participation of stakeholders in policy. According to world bank report (WorldBank, 2013)there is poor conclusion of roads projects in Kenya by 49% compared to other east Africa countries with Uganda scoring 59.5% and Tanzania scoring 70.1%. from the study amongst the three nations, Kenya had the poorest score in term of accomplishment of public projects. For example, the construction of Nairobi-Thika super highway in 2012 was reported to have costed 34.45 billion to complete as to the initial cost of 26.44 billion therefore causing budget overrun by 8.01 billion. The core challenges for the cost overrun were stakeholders' management (Wambui, 2015).

In Tharaka south sub county, over 50% public infrastructure project are still stumbling in bringing effective change even with present of national and county government. The stumbling is due to sidelining stakeholders' inputs in every project level, as well as breach of policy that call for equal stakeholder participation. Many public projects are stalled or are behind time due to lack of proper participation of stakeholders. Some of this project include; tarmacking of

Chiakariga –Marimanti road, construction of Maweni Technical polytechnic, construction of Kithino water dam for irrigation all under national government, construction of Chiakariga snake park, construction of Marathana dispensary all under county government. There are over 12 projects stalled in Tharaka south sub county alone not including other sub counties of Tharaka Nithi county.

## **Theoretical Review**

### **Stakeholders' theory**

This study is based on the stakeholders' theory. This can be tracked back to the great depression in USA from the year 1929-1941 (Harold, 1999) . In reference to General Electric Company that categorized stakeholders into four main groups which entails, employees, customers, shareholders and the community members. There are two major principles in stakeholders' theory that help understand the reason for involvement in project process. The first is the organizational effect principle. This principle is based on modern moral approach of utilitarianism. It states that the moral behavior is determined by consequences that come upon, hence project manager should give more focus on the goods and not the harm that comes along with stakeholders' involvement (Beauchamp, 2004). This builds good relationship of the stakeholders among themselves and toward the established project in every process. The other principle is about organization right which define that manager should not in any way be a violator of other people right by failing to engage them in every activity of the project as they determine their future (Evan, 2004). This principle is based from the ethical theory that call for respect of each individual activities and equal involvement in project processes that being treated as an end and not a mean.

The respect of every stakeholder should be of dignity as they have the right to accept or reject the project on a genuine argument (Beauchamp, 2004). That for a given project to be successful and to perform positively the project manager has to make the operation environment accommodative to all stakeholders regardless of their gender, race, and culture. That the interest of all stakeholders should be harmonized for the achievement of the main goal. In the past, stakeholders' management has been utilized as a tool to infer ethics to strategies and practices in management field. According to (Fassin, 2012), the power of stakeholders is seen as perspective of only a sponsor to the fulfillment of stakeholders' ideas. That there should be goods terms of stakeholders within a project base for achieving the logical agenda (Susniene, 2008). From this theory all stakeholders in Tharaka south sub county have equal opportunity regarding any project and should be provided with necessary support for performance of infrastructure public projects. This theory builds up a neutral ground that balances all variables of this study by ensuring the managers have a clear understanding of primary and secondary stakeholders in Tharaka south sub county. This enables to analyze and control them strategically and group them according to their area of knowledge and interest in various activities of the projects stages which include inclusive initiation, consultative planning, collective implementation and joint monitoring.

### **Research gap**

A big number of studies appear to concur that stakeholder involvement in projects determine project performance. For example, (Kobusingye, 2017) assessed to what extent stakeholders' engagement have influence on project outcome majoring on sanitation, water and hygiene project in Rwanda. In spite of that high number of the studies cover on assessing the role of stakeholders automatically not focusing on the whole project Life cycle in measuring project

performance. The research should be holistic by answering the questions of; how stakeholders will be involved during initiation stage of the project? This study seeks to focus on the Influence of Inclusive Initiation on Performance of Infrastructure Public Projects in Tharaka South Sub County.

## METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive survey design with the pair of quantitative and qualitative techniques being applied. The population included community leaders, government officials, project committee, implementing agencies and project beneficiaries. The study used purposive sampling method to obtain 143 respondents from the target population. Questionnaires were used to obtain firsthand information by use of open and closed ended questions for project beneficiaries. The study used both primary and secondary data. The quantitative data was analyzed by the use of inferential analysis and descriptive analysis in reference to statistical package of social sciences. The descriptive analysis helped to generate the percentage, means and frequencies. Tables were applied in data presentation.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Demographic Features of Respondents

The respondents were both male and female as the youth and the NGOs staffs were more than willing to participate as compared to other participants. This is as a result of more adequate knowledge among them. The social demographic features of the respondent according to the study referred to age, gender and education and if the respondents had benefited with the initiative of poverty alleviation program.

### Age of the Respondents

The age factor was of great concern to the study to determine the age level of the respondents who participated in the research. It was ranged into two category, first category from 18 to 30 and second category from 30 and above. The range of 18 to 30 was of 39% while above 30 was equivalent to 61%.

**Table 1: Respondent Age**

Age	Frequency	Percentage
18-30 years	41	39%
Above 31 years	65	61%
<b>Total</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>100%</b>

From the study the participants age was divided into two, those below 30 years and those above 30 years. The age of the participants between 18 to 30 years was 39% while the majority of the participants was 31 years and above with a percentage of 61%. This was an indication that most of the participants were mature enough to understand the infrastructure public projects in Tharaka south sub county.

### Gender of the Respondents

The study was able to solicit the gender diversity of the respondents. The results were as outlined as given in the table below Table 2.

**Table 2: Respondents Gender**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Male	47	44%
Female	59	56%
<b>Total</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>100%</b>

The result procured indicated that most of residents were female with a percentage of 57% and while the remaining percentage of 43% were male. This indicated that female participants got more involved in the project more than their male counterpart. Women in developing countries have a low social economic status than that of male that their participation was high that is according to Rekha and Gaonkar (2010).

### **Education Background of the Respondents**

The study requested the participants to reveal their education level. The outcome is indicated on the Table 3 below.

**Table 3: Education Background of Respondents**

<b>Education level</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
primary	32	30%
Secondary	21	20%
Tertiary	11	10%
No education	42	40%
<b>Total</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>100</b>

The information was considered for determining the ability of respondents to read and write in order to provide accurate information. According to World Bank (2001), education play a key role in human development since it helps to empower people and help them to actively participate in community building. The empowering is acquired through adequate knowledge and skills that improving quality of life of every individual in the society. In this study participants were required to indicate their highest education level.

From the data collected majority of the respondents lack basic education that is 40%. It is well stated that 30% of the respondents have basic education while 20% have secondary education and only 10% have tertiary education. This is a clear sign that most of people have no basic education.

### **Influence of Stakeholder Inclusive Initiation on Performance of Infrastructure Public Projects**

The objective of the study was to explore the influence of inclusive initiation on performance of infrastructure public projects in Tharaka south sub county.

#### **Level of Agreement of Inclusive Initiation on Performance**

The participants were requested to indicate the level of agreement of the role of inclusive initiation on performance of infrastructure public projects in Tharaka south sub county. The outcome is as displayed on the Table 4 below.



**Table 4: Level of Agreement of Inclusive Initiation on Performance**

	<b>Frequency</b>
Strongly disagree	24
Disagree	23
Moderate	21
Agree	12
Strongly agree	26
<b>Total</b>	<b>106</b>

From Table 4, 26 of the participants strongly agreed that by having an inclusive initiation lead to performance of projects. 24 strongly disagreed, 23 disagreed, 21 were moderate and 12 of them agreed. This indicated that inclusive participation of stakeholders in initiation of infrastructure public project facilitate to adequate performance of projects in Tharaka south sub county.

**Table 5: Stakeholders Influence in Various Aspects of Inclusive Initiation**

<b>Statements</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std Dev</b>
conception inclusivity	04	27	09	09	57	2.748	0.831
Project Feasibility study	11	24	08	46	17	2.965	1.167
Project documentation	22	17	16	13	38	2.671	1.363
Problems analysis	08	19	48	07	24	2.909	1.582
Charter development	13	15	59	08	11	2.923	1.065

From the finding stakeholders involvement play a role of helping them come up with realistic expectations that are acceptable by all therefore minimizing resistance and creating an enabling environment for successful realization of the project and acceptance.

Project conception and identification with properly measures put in place which include human resources inclusion. From the feedback of most of the participants (mean of 2.909, SD 1.582) were moderate that they are engaged in problem analysis of the project. The respondents disagreed that they were allowed to give their views covering the feasibility study of the project by a mean of 2.965, SD 1.167. The community members were moderate that they were engaged in charter development by a mean of 2.923, SD 1.065. However, the community leaders and members agreed that they were engaged in project documentation to strongly disagreed with a mean of 2.671, SD 1.363. Lastly, they disagreed that they were allowed to fully participate at every activity at this stage with a mean of 2.748, SD 0.831.

#### **Influence of Stakeholders Inclusive Initiation on Performance**

From the findings the participants that is the residences of Tharaka Sub County and Community leaders reported that inclusivity of stakeholders to every task at project conception create competent of the project process leading to the performance of the entire project. The community members project managers and government leaders indicated that to some extent all stakeholders were involved in decision and feasibility study of the project, from this finding projects where stakeholders were well involved, the process were more successful and done within time, scope and budget. This help to identify resources availability in order to put adequate measures during the initiation of the project.

### Performance of Public Infrastructure Projects

The dependent variable was performance of infrastructure public projects. The participants were requested to give their views according to their knowledge and understanding about performance of public infrastructure projects in Tharaka south sub-County.

**Table 6: Performance of Public Infrastructure Projects**

Statements	SA	A	M	D	SD	Mean	SD
Budget	12	19	47	15	13	2.993	1.125
Scope	07	39	09	33	18	3.490	1.083
Stakeholders' satisfaction	08	22	27	40	09	3.056	1.050
Schedule	24	10	25	11	36	2.343	1.123

According to the data collected from the respondents, the participants disagreed that the project are done within time with a mean of 2.343, SD 1.123. With a mean of 3.056, SD 1.050 they disagreed that completed project satisfy stakeholders. The respondents agreed Scope specifications was achieved with a mean of 3.490, SD 1.083. Lastly, they were moderate that projects were completed within allocated budget with a mean of 2.993, SD 1.125.

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Summary

Based on the finding inclusive initiation play an essential role in performance of infrastructure public project ( $\beta=0.569$ ,  $\rho=0.00$ ) From the feedback of most of the participants with a mean of 2.90, were moderate that they get in problem analysis. They also disagreed that they were allowed to give their views covering the feasibility study of the project by a mean of 2.965. The participants moderate that they were engaged in charter development by a mean of 2.923. However, they strongly disagreed that they were engaged in project documentation with a mean of 2.671. Lastly, they disagreed that they were allowed to fully participate at every activity at this stage with a mean of 2.748.

#### Conclusion

Based on the findings, the study concluded that Inclusive initiation has a critical influence on performance of infrastructure public projects has it bears the beginning of the project. Inclusive initiation. The stakeholders were quite aware of projects that were to take place in their areas. By high participation of stakeholders especially the community members, there is high influence on project parameters.

#### Recommendations

The study recommends that inclusive initiation since is the first stage of the project should be carefully evaluated and stakeholders given chance to participate fully in every aspect of the stage, this brings a positive impact to the project and create a solid cooperation immediately and the begging of the project activities creating a strong background of the entire projects through elaborative feasibility study, established support level and resources identification. Therefore, project managers should ensure commitment of each stakeholders involved to create a stable begging of the projects that facilitate success of other levels of the projects. The study also recommends that the decision-making bodies responsible for project initiation and approval should include diverse representation from the community.

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